

University of Toronto
Faculty of Music

THURSDAY SCHOLARSHIP CONCERT

ORFORD STRING QUARTET
Quartet-in-Residence

ROBERT AITKEN, FLUTE

VLADIMIR ORLOFF, CELLO

ROXOLANA ROSLAK, SOPRANO

JERRY STANICK, VIOLA

8:30 p.m.

CONCERT HALL
EDWARD JOHNSON BUILDING

JANUARY 17, 1974

PROGRAM

Flute Quartet in G Major, K.285

Mozart

Andante

Tempo di menuetto

Flute Quartet in D Major, K.285

Allegro

Adagio

Rondo

Robert Aitken, flute

Andrew Dawes, violin

Terence Helmer, viola

Marcel St-Cyr, cello

Written as part of a commission at the request of a wealthy Dutch amateur, de Jean, the flute quartets D Major and G Major share the same Koechel numbers with a third quartet in C Major. Despite difficulties in exact dating of the works, they are generally relegated to Mannheim 1777. The G Major quartet consists of only two movements, Andante and Tempo di Menuetto, the second being a Rondo in form, while the third member of K.285, the C Major quartet, consists of an Allegro, & a Theme and Variations. In view of the incomplete format of the two quartets and of the fact that they were found as rough drafts, it has been suggested that they belong together as one work, with the difference in key being the main factor opposing this hypothesis.

In spite of Mozart's alleged dislike for the flute, the D Major flute Quartet is assessed by Einstein as containing some of the best solo flute material ever written. The first theme of the allegro movement, described as a solo by the purely chordal string accompaniment, sits upon the ear of the modern listener as a melody which might function in any typical Mozart setting. This perceptual familiarity is probably based on the striking resemblance, both in melodic line and respective textural context, of this opening theme with that of the Clarinet Concerto in A Major (K.622), written many years later in 1791.

The Allegro movement is based on two thematic groups, the first of which contains two themes. The third theme alone is written in the dominant, and receives no treatment in the development as do the themes of the first group. The Adagio movement is followed upon immediately, without a pause, by a bright Rondo in 2/4.

Il Tramonto (Poème etto Lirico)
Andante - Appassionato

Respighi

Roxolana Roslak, soprano
Andrew Dawes, violin Terence Helmer, viola
Kenneth Perkins, violin Marcel St-Cyr, cello

Il Tramonto, a highly sensitive work, was written during Respighi's important 'Roman' period, 1917-1926 in which his greatest works, such as 'Fontane di Roma', and 'Pini di Roma' were completed. The text is an Italian translation, by Ascoli, of the Shelly poem of 1816, and the concept of the vocal poem plus instrumental "commentary" descends in the spirit of the earlier French settings of the late nineteenth century, such as the "Poème de l'amour et de la mer" of Chausson, or the "Damoiselle Éluë" of Debussy.

The work presents a variety of treatments of the recitative style, including arioso passages over sustained chords in the quartet, the reverse: monotonous vocal parts over more melodious string textures, and a static hybrid of these two techniques. Not necessarily in a novel manner, but certainly in an expressive one, Respighi declaims the sensitive text, punctuating Shelly's original stanza divisions with instrumental interludes. The age old technique of word-painting is employed with the use of a tritone at the words "dolor pensoso", and fortissimo dissonance as an accompaniment to "la nuda tomba". A pervading motive based on a rising sixth followed by descending step patterns (in various mutations) plus intricate counterpoint between the first violin and the voice are cohesive features of the work.

Intermission

Sextet Op 70 "Souvenir de Florence"

Tchaikovsky

Allegro con spirito
Adagio cantabile e con moto
Allegretto moderato
Allegro vivaci

Andrew Dawes, Kenneth Perkins, violins
Terence Helmer, Jerry Stanick, violas
Marcel St-Cyr, Vladimir Orloff, cellos

A later work (written 1890), the Sextet Op 70 was revised in 1892, during the time Tchaikovsky was working on the Nutcracker. The programmatic title does not necessarily reflect in the music an Italian flavour, but rather, the work seems quite strongly Slavic (in melody and rhythm) at some times, and quite a prophet of the Nutcracker at other times. All four movements are characterized by the use of pianissimo passages as a formal punctuation. This is most clearly seen in the second movement, a lyrical duet between the violin and cello whereby a large double pianissimo section based on sixteenth-note triplets, outlining contrary-motion scale passages, acts as a prelude to the recap of the original duet. The three remaining movements are more rustic in their melodic material. A rather "folksy" theme in the first movement serves as the first theme, which is countered by the more complex second subject, which entails a canon between the first violin and first cello, both of whose rhythm is in hemiolic relationship to the parts surrounding.

The third movement is reminiscent of a Russian dance with its low register and the "square" structure of the phrase and rhythm of the first theme. Again, a pianissimo section acts as a transition to a bright theme not unlike that of the Nutcracker dances.

The fourth movement seems the most Slavic of all, with its preponderance on the open fifth as an accompaniment to the first theme, followed by a thematic restatement in parallel thirds.

(Notes Mary Rizza di Sardi)

* Next Scholarship Concert:

Thursday, February 21, 1974 - "Music of the Twenties"

* Next Event:

Wednesday, January 23, 1974 - Opera "Don Giovanni"